## Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

## Listing of Claims

1. (Currently Amended) In a computer system having a processor, memory, and data storage subsystems, a computer generated graphical user interface for accepting user input commands comprising:

a first area containing a compact listing of menu items, the first area further comprising:

an operating system (OS) section consisting of commonly accessed OS ~~operating system~~ specific menu items ~~and a single menu item expanding access to all other operating system specific items~~; and

an application program (AP) section consisting of commonly accessed AP ~~application program~~ specific menu items and a single AP menu item expanding access to all other AP ~~application program~~ specific menu items,

wherein the OS ~~operating system~~ section is grouped completely separately from the AP ~~application program~~ section; and

a second area that includes an icon selected from a set of icons based on a [[the]] location of a pointer relative to an associated OS [[the]] menu item;

~~wherein the first and second areas do not overlap~~; and

wherein the graphical user interface is part of an operating system shell.

2. (Original) The computer generated graphical user interface of claim 1 wherein the first area is a start menu.

3. (Original) The computer generated graphical user interface of claim 2 wherein the icon is an animated icon.

4. (Previously Presented) The computer generated graphical user interface of claim 3 wherein the animated icon appears as hovering over at least a portion of the second area.

5. (Original) The computer generated graphical user interface of claim 3 wherein the animated icon is three-dimensional in appearance.

6. (Previously Presented) The computer generated graphical user interface of claim 4, wherein the hovering of the animated icon comprises a three-dimensional appearing object located in the operating system shell.

7. (Original) The computer generated graphical user interface of claim 4 wherein the animated icon further appears reflected in the start menu to give a further three-dimensional hovering effect.

8. (Original) The computer generated graphical user interface of claim 7 wherein the animated icon appears as rocking from side-to-side.

9. (Previously Presented) The computer generated graphical user interface of claim 7 wherein the animated icon rotates based on the movement of the pointer.

10. (Original) The computer generated graphical user interface of claim 3 wherein the animated icon is contextually related to an item in the start menu over which the pointer is located.

11. (Original) The computer generated graphical user interface of claim 10 wherein the contextually related animated icon provides an indication of an action that will occur if the menu item is selected.

12. (Original) The computer generated graphical user interface of claim 2 wherein the icon is located immediately adjacent to the start menu.

13. (Currently Amended) A method of providing visual feedback in a graphical user interface having a menu comprising a compact listing of displayed menu items, each menu item being associated with an icon different in appearance from the associated menu item, comprising the steps of:

receiving a first user input that causes a pointer to be located over ~~a menu item of~~ an operating system (OS) section, the OS ~~operating system~~ section consisting of commonly accessed OS ~~operating system~~ specific menu items and a single OS menu item expanding access to all other OS ~~operating system~~ specific menu items;

in response to the first user input, displaying in a first distinct area of the graphical user interface an [[the]] icon associated with that OS ~~operating system~~ specific menu item located by the first user input, wherein the first distinct area remains in a fixed position relative to the pointer upon movement of the pointer;

receiving a second user input that causes the [[a]] pointer to be located over ~~a menu item of~~ an application program (AP) section, the AP ~~application program~~ section consisting of commonly accessed AP ~~application program~~

specific menu items and a single AP menu item expanding access to all other AP ~~application program~~ specific menu items; and

in response to the second user input, displaying in a second ~~another~~ distinct area of the graphical user interface an [[the]] icon associated with that AP ~~application program~~ specific menu item located by the second user input; wherein:

the second distinct area remains in a fixed position relative to the pointer upon movement of the pointer;

the first distinct area and the second distinct area do ~~does~~ not overlap the OS or AP menu item located by the first or second user input, respectively;

the graphical user interface is part of an operating system shell organized into a tree-structural hierarchy;

the associated icon provides an indication of an action that will occur if the displayed OS or AP menu item is selected; and

the OS ~~operating system~~ section is grouped completely separately from the AP ~~application program~~ section.

14. (Original) The method of claim 13 wherein the icon is an animated icon.

15. (Original) The method of claim 14 wherein the menu is a start menu.

16. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 15 wherein the animated icon is contextually related to the animated icon's associated menu item in the start menu.

17. (Original) The method of claim 14 wherein the displaying step further comprises:

an introduction animation element that causes the animated icon to move and flip;

a looping animation; and

an ending animation that changes the icon back to its original appearance.

18. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 14 wherein the animated icon is a predefined object type in a shell namespace, wherein the shell namespace organizes a file system of the operating system shell into a single tree-structured hierarchy.

19. (Currently Amended) One or more computer-readable storage media having computer readable instructions embodied thereon that, when executed by a computing device, perform a method of providing visual feedback in a graphical user interface, the method comprising:

providing a menu, comprising a compact listing of displayed menu items, wherein each of the displayed menu items is associated with an icon located apart from the associated displayed menu item, the menu further comprising:

an operating system (OS) section consisting of commonly accessed OS ~~operating system~~ specific menu items and a single OS menu item expanding access to all other OS ~~operating system~~ specific menu items; and

an application program (AP) section consisting of commonly accessed AP ~~application program~~ specific menu items and a single AP menu item expanding access to all other AP ~~application program~~ specific menu items,

wherein the OS ~~operating system~~ section is grouped completely separately from the AP ~~application program~~ section;

receiving user input that causes a pointer to be located over one of the displayed menu items; and

in response to the user input, displaying the icon associated with the pointer-located [[that]] displayed menu item in a distinct area of the graphical user interface;

wherein the distinct area does not overlap the pointer-located displayed menu item; and

wherein the graphical user interface is part of an operating system shell.

20. (Previously Presented) The computer readable storage media of claim 19 wherein the icon is an animated icon.

21. (Previously Presented) The computer readable storage media of claim 20 wherein the menu is a start menu.

22. (Previously Presented) The computer readable storage media of claim 21 wherein the animated icon is contextually related to the animated icon's associated menu item in the start menu.

23. (Previously Presented) The computer readable storage media of claim 20 wherein the displaying step further comprises:

an introduction animation element that causes the animated icon to move and flip;

a looping animation; and

an ending animation that changes the icon back to its original appearance.

24. (Previously Presented) The computer readable storage media of claim 20 wherein the animated icon is a predefined object type in the operating system shell.

25-29. (Cancelled)

30. (Currently Amended) One or more computer readable storage media containing computer readable instructions embodied thereon for providing, as part of an operating system shell, a computer generated graphical user interface for accepting user input commands, said graphical user interface comprising:

a pointer for selecting menu items and icons;

a start menu divided into a compact listing of discrete sections, a first discrete section consisting of commonly accessed operating system (OS) specific menu items and a single OS menu item expanding access to all other OS ~~operating system~~ specific menu items, the first discrete section grouped separately from a second discrete section consisting of commonly accessed application program (AP) specific menu items and a single AP menu item expanding access to all other AP ~~application program~~ specific menu items; and

an animated three-dimensional appearing icon that moves side-to-side so that a user can see the edges rotating, and the animated three-dimensional appearing icon changes appearance based on the OS menu item or the AP menu item over which the pointer is located, wherein the animated three-dimensional

appearing icon is displayed in a different, non-overlapping discrete section from the corresponding OS menu item or the AP menu item;

wherein the animated three-dimensional appearing icon provides an animated indication of a first action that will occur if a first OS or AP menu item is selected, and further morphs into a second appearance when the pointer moves over a second OS or AP menu item to provide an animated indication of a second action that will occur if the second OS or AP menu item is selected.

31. (Previously Presented) The computer readable storage media of claim 30 wherein the side-to-side movement of the three-dimensional appearing icon is determined in real-time in response to a movement of the pointer.